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UNCLAS HARARE 001364

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S
USDOC FOR AMANDA HILLIGAS
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON
STATE PASS USDOJ/FWS FOR KARL STROHMEYER

1E. O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [BTIO](#) [EINV](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL PARKS OPERATIONS DIRECTOR- A REAL
OPERATOR

1. (SBU) Summary: The arrest of Vitalis Chadenga, the National Parks and Wildlife Authority's Operations Director, yet again reveals GOZ officials' predilection for private gain over public welfare and provides an insight into the fate of wildlife land if nationalized. End Summary

2. (U) According to the August 4, 2004 edition of the GOZ-controlled Herald newspaper, Vitalis Chadenga was arrested on Monday, August 2, for "allegedly capturing wild animals worth about[Z]\$198 million [approximately US\$36543.43] without a permit and defrauding his employer of about [Z]\$3,5 million [approximately US\$645.96]." In addition to faking overseas official travel, Chadenga is also implicated in "captur[ing] 15 sable and 30 kudus in Mashonaland West for his personal use." He probably exported the animals or sold them as trophies.

3. (SBU) According to World Wildlife Fund's Raoul DuToit, the head of the Nyamaneche Game Capture Unit in Mvurwi assisted with the animal captures. Chadenga has also connived with South African safari operators in the Marongora and Matetsi areas.

4. (SBU) National Parks' General Secretary Dr. Morris Mtsambiwa told EconOff the "investigations are underway on allegations of capture and translocation of game without a permit involving Mr. Chadenga and Game Management Africa. While the police are carrying out their investigations we are also carrying our own investigations and have since suspended one of our officers on the ground who actually took part in the capture of three sables in one of our parks. We still have to establish Mr. Chadenga's involvement."

5. (SBU) Comment: Once again, we see GOZ officials making private again out of public positions. This does not bode well for conservancies and other wildlife areas. Mtsambiwa assured EconOff that the selection process for proposed 25-year leases would ensure that only committed conservationists would receive wildlife area lands. Given the GOZ's management of the fast track land reform process, including numerous and credible allegations of high-placed party officials receiving prime land and failing to utilize it, we are skeptical about such assurances. Additionally, with National Parks officials illegally taking animals off GOZ-protected lands, one worries whether nationalized conservancies will face a similar fate.

Sullivan